

Report to: **South Hams Executive**  
Date: **15 March 2018**  
Title: **Waste Policies Review**  
Portfolio Area: **Cllr Gilbert - Commercial Services**  
Wards Affected: **All**

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y / N**

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**Recommendations:**

- 1. That the Executive approve the policy updates as recommended by the Waste Working Group , outlined in paragraph 5 of this report and provided in full in Appendix 1**
- 2. Any minor changes considered necessary to the terms as highlighted are delegated to the Commissioning Manager (Waste) in consultation with the Lead Executive Member for Commercial Services and Chair of the Waste Working Group.**

**1. Executive summary**

- 1.1. Following a review of current policies in conjunction with industry best practice, it is proposed that a number of waste policies are updated. These policies will formalise current practice as well as supporting planned consolidation exercises that aim to improve waste collection service efficiencies. Ensuring waste policies are as up to date as possible will also empower bidders in the current waste procurement exercise to provide more accurate and cost effective solutions. Policies to be updated include Assisted Collection, Bulky Waste Collection, Clinical Waste Collection and Collections from Private Lanes.

- 1.2. Recommendation comes from the Waste Working Group to adopt policy changes as detailed in paragraph 5 and Appendix 1.

## 2. **Background**

- 2.1. Policies on waste collection in South Hams were last reviewed in March 2014. Since then collection methods and ways of working, including back office functions, have been developed and improved in order to access savings and realise efficiencies.
- 2.2. Action is now required to outline and support these changes through formalised policies. In addition, by reviewing and updating current policies opportunities have arisen to look closer at the provided service and identify areas that require attention.
- 2.3. Up to date and ambitious policies will also potentially improve the outcome of the procurement exercise currently underway for the provision of waste collection services. It allows the authorities to be clear with bidders regarding the level of service expected to be provided as part of the contract and enables bidders to present accurate and cost effective solutions.
- 2.4. The policies we propose are updated are as follows:
  - 2.4.1. **(1) Assisted Collection** – is a service offered to disabled or infirm residents who are not able, and do not have anyone else able, to move their waste to their property boundary for collection. Therefore, an operative collects their waste from an agreed location on their property. In the past, residents receiving this service have not been subject to regular review which has resulted in some properties receiving the service when not eligible, i.e. the resident originally receiving the service has moved or passed away.
  - 2.4.2. **(2) Bulky waste collection** – is a service offered to collect bulky waste items which residents would find difficult to recycle/dispose of otherwise. The current charging structure is 2 items of white goods for £31.50 with additional items charged at £15.70 per item. Other items are charged at £51.50 per load with a load being defined as what can reasonably fit into a transit van. South Hams is the only Devon authority to charge on a load basis. This way of charging has led to the service not being used just for bulky items but instead as a house clearance service of sorts. Residents regularly add multiple bags of refuse sacks or 'boxes of junk' to their requests. Residents have benefitted from several years of comparatively low prices, when compared with neighbouring authorities with no annual inflationary increases, whereas most councils increase their prices every year. Updating the policy will help enforce the use of this service for only bulky items, and is expected to deliver an increase in annual income of £6,000 and will gain additional operational savings.
  - 2.4.3. **(3) Clinical waste collection** – is a service offered to residents who produce clinical waste or sharps as a result of at home healthcare and such collections are available on a weekly or ad-hoc basis. As part of the revised Controlled Waste Regulations 2012, it was clarified that 'offensive' healthcare waste (i.e. sanitary products, nappies, absorbent hygiene products) does not need to be disposed of through a separate collection and can be disposed of as residual (black bag) waste. Therefore, a review exercise has taken place to

identify who is using the clinical waste collection for this purpose and advising them on how to correctly dispose of this waste. This exercise resulted in 30% of properties on the clinical waste collection being removed from the collection list and advised to put 'offensive' waste in their black bags. As the disposal of clinical waste is significantly higher compared with residual waste this will inevitably create savings. A policy is now needed to support this change and to ensure any potential new users of the service are advised of the difference between clinical and offensive waste with additional services provided as appropriate.

- 2.4.4. **(4) Collections from Private Roads** – Historically, there are a number of properties in the district where refuse and recycling vehicles have travelled over private roads to collect waste. A large majority of these lanes and roads feature poorly maintained road surfaces and overgrown vegetation. Such obstacles impact upon the authority's ability to provide a safe working environment for their workforce but can also cause damage that results in expensive vehicle repairs. Annually, around £12000 worth of refuse and recycling fleet repairs can be linked to damage that occurred on private roads. The authority is not lawfully bound to collect from such roads and including them on collection rounds can cause delays and create inefficiencies, as some can take 10-15 minutes to collect from as opposed to the roughly 30 secs to 2 minutes that most collections take. A policy is required to define the criteria for refusal of collections in certain circumstances and instead require residents to present their waste at the edge of the public highway.
- 2.4.5. **(5) Collection from Private Roads Review** – outlines how a review of existing collections from private roads will be conducted during 2018-19.

### 3. **Outcomes/outputs**

- 3.1. Proposals put forward plan to formalise existing practise through policy, improve efficiency, keep records up to date, improve service delivery, reduce costs and increase income from bulky waste.

### 4. **Options available and consideration of risk**

- 4.1. An alternative option is for the policies to remain the same however this will result in continued 'grey' policy areas which impact on residents and customer services. It would also leave bidders of the contract unsure of our position which ultimately could cause them to overprice their bids to account for uncertainty.
- 4.2. Leaving the bulky waste collection policy and pricing as it is would mean limiting the authority's ability to access additional income. Operational costs would not be reduced by continuing with the current practice for assisted and clinical collections.
- 4.3. Existing policies and all policy changes put forward in paragraph 5 have been compared and contrasted against best practice examples from other local authorities both locally and nationally. This highlighted that while current policies are of good quality there is room for improvement.
- 4.4. The policies have been reviewed and agreed on by the Waste Working Group, in consultation with waste specialist officers. As appropriate, case

managers and CST team leaders have been consulted with regard to the potential impacts of the policies on customer first staff and those accessing the affected services to endeavour to reduce failure demand.

## 5. **Proposed Way Forward**

### 5.1. Proposed changes and updates to policies

5.1.1. **(1) Assisted Collection** – users of this service on a 'permanent' basis will now be subject to a review every two years. This is to ensure our records are kept up to date so we can deliver an effective and efficient service.

5.1.2. **(2) Bulky waste collection** – Update charging mechanism and prices to move closer to that of neighbouring authorities. The proposed new charge is £18 per item, planned to be applied from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.

5.1.3. **(3) Clinical waste collection** – users of this service on a 'permanent' basis will now be subject to a review every two years. Residents receiving the service will be reminded to opt in to the service every two years. This is to ensure our records are kept up to date so we can deliver an effective and efficient service. The policy has also been updated to clarify what type of waste is eligible for this collection. This has been paired with a review of current customers which has resulted in a 30% reduction of those using the service.

5.1.4. **(4) Collections from Private Roads** – formalises policies to support safe working practice and reduce likelihood of vehicle damage.

5.1.5. **(5) Collection from Private Roads Review** – it is proposed that these collections are reviewed in 2018-19 against a set of criteria as detailed in Appendix 1.

## 6. **Implications**

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance	Y	<p>The revised Controlled Waste Regulations 2012, defines the types of waste that are considered to be household waste and where it is appropriate for local authorities to charge for the collection of these wastes.</p> <p>The Environmental Protection Act 1990 defines the duties of a waste collection authority and the powers that they have to refuse collection of waste situated at a place which in the opinion of the authority is so isolated or inaccessible that the cost of collecting it would be unreasonably high.</p> <p>If adopted, the procurement documents (specification) will need to be updated so that bidders can consider and factor in their pricing. Bidders have already been made aware that</p>

		<p>policies are expected to change before contract award.</p>
Financial	Y	<p>A direct financial implication would be additional income from bulky waste pricing change. Through modelling using 16/17 figures these changes could increase income by up to 35%, roughly £6,000. There is no additional financial or staff expenditure involved with this change.</p> <p>Indirectly, other financial implications could include reductions in the costs of delivering clinical waste and assisted collection service. However, these are difficult to measure as they are intertwined with other service delivery.</p> <p>Also indirectly, these policies could aid in the realisation of savings from re-procuring the waste collection contract, however again this would be difficult to measure and attribute to a particular area.</p> <p>Costs of vehicle maintenance is likely to be reduced by travelling down less poorly maintained private roads. Currently, around £12000 worth of refuse and recycling fleet repairs a year can be linked to damage that occurred on private roads.</p>
Risk	Y	<p>There is a minor risk that changing to a charge per item system for bulky waste could result in a reduction of residents using the service. As the operational staff and vehicles that provide this service are also used for other work, e.g. fly tip removals and missed bin collections, a reduction in collections would mean that the related staff and vehicles resources would simply be reassigned to other jobs as required.</p> <p>There are concerns that a reduction in residents using the service could result in fly tipping however we have spoken to other authorities about whether they saw an increase when they have made price changes and they have all advised there was no notable increase. In addition the council will continue to actively monitor fly tip hot spots and seek appropriate action and prosecution.</p> <p>There are risks that changes in policies, particularly private roads, could result in loss of reputation. To mitigate this, in any instances where collection points from private roads/lanes are relocated to the edge of the highway all affected properties will be given sufficient notice that will explain the council's position as effectively as possible.</p>

Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		Not applicable.
Safeguarding		Not applicable.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		Not applicable.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		<p>Helps to ensure we provide our frontline staff with a safe working environment and that risk of injury is reduced by limiting travel over hazardous surfaces and manual handling over long distances.</p> <p>CST will be fully briefed and the related website pages will contain all the relevant information to ensure that the classification of clinical waste is as clear as possible. This will help prevent any genuine clinical waste, such as infectious material or sharps, from being placed in the residual waste stream. Operatives are trained to conduct brief visual checks for such items before collecting and manual handling of waste is kept to a minimum.</p>
Other implications		

### **Supporting Information**

#### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – South Hams Policy Review

#### **Background Papers:**

None